VIEWPOINT

Volume X, No. 1 November 1, 1972

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POINTS OF VIEW

In this inaugural editorial which begins Viewpoint's tenth year, we would like to raise some questions regarding the nature of opinion, and its expression within a divergent community such as PTS.

By definition, opinion refers to a "view," a "judement," a "belief." We take it for granted that, by the dictionary's standards, there is plenty of "opinion" to be found in what is loosely called the "Seminary Community." Bulletin Board notices, discussion groups, the existence of organizations such as PSW, ABS, Theological Forum, the Seminary Conference attests to the presence -- and motivating power -- of opinion.

Sometimes less obvious, although no less real, is another aspect of opinion at PTS. This concerns the ready-made insulation that exists between individuals and between groups. A student can go through his entire seminary career without ever actively engaging in dialogue -- on the so-called gut level -- with his peers or with the faculty and administration. While we would not advocate methodsoofdestructive confrontation so often born only of a clash between hostility and defensiveness, it is yet apparent that opinion is often not free-flowing, bottled up until it can be reinforced in discussions of the like-minded. We believe that this practice is not necessarily 100% characteristic of seminarians, and yet it is widespread enough to have a deadening effect on seminary life, and it is detrimental to personal growth.

A couple of examples may illustrate the problem: Witness the handful of frustrated students who showed up in the Campus Center Lounge to discuss the question of Student Delegates to Faculty Committees. We can sympathize with this frustration and appreciate the opinions which were expressed, and can understand that this problem may not be a burning issue for all. But the problem remains: there was almost no cross-fertilization of opinion, and attendants and non-attendants to the meeting were both the poorer.

Another recent conversation produced this remark by a new student on campus. The student, perhaps through no fault of his own, was forced to ask, "What is ABS, anyway?"

And then there was the two-page, 10-point letter (reprinted on pages 3 and 4 of this issue), written by a McGovern supporter and addressed to "Seminarians Voting for R. Nixon." This writer (himself a McGovern fan) was half-way down page one before he realized he was reading someone else's mail. The point is that we tend to gravitate towards discussion and material that firms up our own opinions. We wonder how many Nixon supporters read the letter, or better yet, took the writer of the letter up on his suggestion to meet to discuss the election personally, from a theological standpoint.

It can always be said, of course, that the dialogue can be found if you'll only make the effort to find it and speak out; the opportunity for involvement is there if you're only willing to get involved. And yet experience teaches us that many seminarians are unwilling -- or unable -- to test their opinions with opposing viewpoints in any kind of truly open forum.

We have, of course, no ready blue-print for the cross-fertiliztion needed so much. There is no sure-fire antidote for the illness termed by one diagnostician as "The Silent Majority." We do offer these pages and those of future issues as one means to air various points of view; a place to be educated, enraged, or inspired by the thoughts of those who will share them in public forum such Viewpoint hopes to be. (continued on page 6)

1. How can you as a Christian vote for a candidate who appears to have timed an Indochina peace for his own re-election? How can you justify the victimization of six million Asians during the last four years for the purpose of U.S. face-saving?

2. How can you as a Christian support a government which has forsaken its God-given task of administering justice? The proliferation of scandals is appalling -- large grain corporations profit windfalls from the Russian grain deal in violation of the law, the carpet industry contributes several hundred thousand dollars to the GOP campaign in return for postponement of carpet safety standards, the hamburger chains contribute $ ¼ million in exchange for the exemption of those under 21 from minimum wage boosts, the ITT affair, the milk scandal, ad infinitum. The constitutional rights of citizens are impugned and eroded with such measures as illegal wiretaps, no-knock entries, preventive detention, the illegitimate use of the grand jury. The unfair tax structures go unchanged, and the tax load is shifted onto the back of the working man.

3. How can you as a Christian vote for a candidate who is not supported by one black student at Princeton Seminary? Maybe before Election Day you ought to discipline yourself to sit down with some black students and find out why they will not support your candidate.

4. How can you as a Christian support an Administration which has made one of the deadliest assualts on the American political process in memory? Do you find it morally objectionable that the Administration had a hand in tipping Muskie from the primaries and Sen. Eagleton from the ticket? Or that one quarter of a million dollars should be budgeted for the bugging of phones and disruption of opposition campaigns, political sabotage, and the burglarizing of the opposition party headquarters?

5. How can you as a Christian vote for an Administration that set as its number one priority the reform of the welfare mess, then at the last minute, withdrew its support of the Senate Family Assistance Plan? The Bible comes across rather strongly in its concern for the poor. Yet Nixon's economic policies have added 5 million workers to the welfare rolls and his disdainful rhetoric for the unemployed has helped to obscure the fact that most of these people are incapable of work through disability or are simply unable to gain employment in the job market (witness: an 18% unemployment rate among returning Viet Vets).

6. How can you as a Christian, in an era of skyrocketing medical costs, vote for a candidate who has opposed several extensions of health care benefits and yet offers no comprehensive national health care plan for our numerous citizens who cannot afford it?

7. How can you as a Christian vote for a President who has established a court religion, thereby undermining the traditional separation of Church and State? Nixon has attended church only rarely in four years. His "church" consists of inviting carefully screened preachers to the East Room of the White House, men who will deliver an innocuous message of negligible prophetic worth.

When national leaders thus selectively expose themselves to the Church's Gospel, it is thereby prostituted and appropriated toward foreign ends. Nixon has in effect established a court religion that functions as an arm of the status quo.

8. How can you as a Christian vote for a candidate who as President has surrounded his policies with a high wall of secrecy? Nixon has held fewer news conferences than any other President in history. The public is, in effect, shut off from the highest concentrations of power.

9. How can you as a Christian vote for a candidate who said he would work to eliminate hunger among children in America and yet as President has done nothing toward that objective?

10. How can you as a Christian vote for a candidate who runs his campaign on half-truths and serious distortions of the positions of the other major candidate? Do you really believe that McGovern would put half the country on welfare? or that a $50 billion military budget (that still leaves us with 12 times overkill) is "running up the white flag of surrender." Do you really believe that McGovern is "banking on young radicals and Communist fronts to win in November"? Do you really believe that McGovern has ever come out for the legalization of marijuana? or that he still holds to the complicated $1000 per individual negative income tax proposal??

I post these questions because I want to challenge you to reconsider your views in light of the Christian faith we both profess. Perhaps I have overlooked many things, of which I would be grateful to you should you call them to my attention. I don't think for a moment that your votes will swing the election here in New Jersey. I merely pose these questions because I am genuinely concerned about how you are experiencing the Christian life. I do not like to think that your social thinking may jeopardize your relationship with your Creator. Forgive me for resorting to this rather impersonal means but I have had great difficulty in talking to most of you because you seem to want to keep your views to yourself, which is to deny the spirit of our seminary community. Let me offer Room 409 Alexander Hall as a place where at any time you can come and have an open discussion of these matters.

A brother in Christ

Craig D. Eriksson

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES ON FACULTY COMMITTEES

As of Monday night, the Princeton Seminary Conference has taken up the question of appointment to all seminary and faculty committees. A representative group of students, faculty, and alumni, and administration will study the question for a month leading to a discussion at the next conference.

The issues involved are not ones of personality conflict with the President of the Seminary but are matters of principle. Many students and faculty people are of the opinion that a group represented on a committee should appoint its own representatives. At the present, seminary policy dictates that the president appoint both faculty and students to committees. At least 187 students (those who signed petitions) feel that this is not the best method.

It seems to me that there are at least two issues involved in this question. First, it is only logical that a representative be responsible to the person or persons who appoint her or him. In this particular case the representative would be logically responsible to the president of the seminary even if practically responsible to students. The second point is that the person or persons who appoint a representative have the power of recall. It only seems reasonable that students be given that responsibility over their representatives. When this is not the case a situation can arise in which a student is either effectively speaking out against administrative decisions and could be removed by that administration or oppositely, not speaking for student opinion and be left in office.

I want to repeat that there is no crisis situation in terms of present action of Dr. McCord. I do not expect such a situation. But, to me, the principle of the discussion is vital.

Harri Hedgbeth

PRINCETON SECULAR SEMINARY

Our Lord Jesus Christ said (or rather the evangelistist Luke has the synoptic Jesus say of himself or an apocalyptic figure of Jewish lore, the Son of Man (note only in the Lucan account does this line appear, doubtless it is a primitive addition from the Aramaic of apostle Q whose existence is doubted because he is not extant)) -- where was I? -- oh yes, Jesus once said, "...(W)hen the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on earth?" This used to be an important question. However, most-theologians have determined the Son of Man has no meaning for secular culture, and hence most-theologians say He certainly would not be so rude as to appear again, and hence we do not need faith. Which is better -- news, since living by faith was never a real gas. And now we are free to be ourselves, thanks to most-theologians. The faith which was once for all delivered to the saints has been flushed down the critical sewer system, and the pages of Scripture have gratuitously been used as toiletpaper. Now the church politic has an empty stomach and is gorging itself on every wind of doctrine.

Princeton Seminary, faced with this crisis, has, like the United Methodist Church, adopted a pluralistic creed. You can believe anything you damn well please as long as you meet the requirements. The Seminary is so busy trying to decide what the Gospel is, and how to apply an as yet undefined Christian message, that the result is no message is presented at all. Our Seminary koinonia has intellectual nihilism at its core, instead of the Spirit of the Living God.

But suppose you have a certain amountof traditional, orthodox, Christian faith? What then is your response to Princeton's wishy-washy mentality? Well, you might feel that seminary is not a time for growing in the faith, but rather of testing your already well-developed theology in the crucible of critical thought thus the strong in the faith survive, and the weaker brothers, with little protection from seditious ideas, can slide into the pit of hell for all we care. This view is infernal Predestinarianism and perverted Darwinism. Remember the same Jesus who questioned whether or not faith would survive also said the man who was responsible for the falling away of a brother, ought to be provided with a two-donkey millstone as a neck piece and cast into the depths of the sea. Plainly this is no way for a seminary (especially) to operate.

The Seminary seems to care as little for the spiritual (and what does spiritual mean anyway?) growth of its student body, as the Pentagon cares about the gooks and the slants. The status quo is impossible.

Another alternative might be to form a confessing church within the Seminary, as Bonhoeffer did in a similar situation in Germany. But such a body would split our school and put an end to Princeton Seminary. And we have been assuming the existence of P.T.S. was a positive thing, have we not?

A better alternative would be to do what Union Seminary has done, namely, to drop the pretense of being anything but an intellectual think-tank and a sub-institution of society which turns out professional nice-guys. Then whoever enrolled would know what he was getting into. Princeton Secular Seminary is better than a P.T.S. with a pluralistic creed.

Or a final solution might be to recognize officially the possibility of the existence of the Trinity, especially the Holy Spirit. As it is we stand around in a theological twilight waiting for what we suppose to be the dawn of new hope, and what will really be an everlasting midnight and a daimonic apocalypse.

Dan Shute

POINTS OF VIEW
(continued from page 2)

But as one contributor to this issue points out, the printed word is impersonal at its best. And in the end, those with opinions -- especially that deeply-felt brand of opinion we know as conviction -- will have to come out of hiding and be heard, and hear others. Or else, when we have bid farewell to the insulation of PTS, the church and the world which we will enter will be the poorer for our own poorness.

Editorial/jvc

Wanted: PTS STUDENTS who enjoy participating in worship and/or leading chapel services. See or call James Pohlhammer. No experience required.

ANYBODY SEE THE CHAPLAIN?

Pardon me -- I'm new here. Could you tell me who the chaplain at PTS is? I know we must have one, only I don't know who he -- or she -- is.

PTS is a good seminary and everybody knows that any seminary worth its salt has a chaplain.

Am I having troubles? Well, 'ya -- sort of . . . It's not me -- it's my mom back home in Little Rock -- Sis wrote and told me Doc Fields said she'd need surgery for it -- a growth. I'm worried -- I wanted someone to maybe help me pray -- or at least someone to talk with.

Yeah, the dorm advisor's a great guy -- we go to K.I. a lot and have a good time -- but he's not a chaplain. We had a chaplain at our Presbyterian College in Iowa and you could really talk with him. It's funny -- prayers, good prayers, just sort of came natural-like to us.

My teachers? Smart people -- but too busy to be chaplains. They've got classes to teach.

Oh, well, I'll check with the Dean. Surely he can tell me who our chaplain is.

-- "Troubled Soul"

OF MICE AND MEN

We purposely haven't asked who did it -- or why. Not that we wouldn't have wanted the facts to influence us when our mind was already made up, but we feel the person or persons who turned the basement floor of Hodge Hall into a permanent advertisement for Disneyland and Latin 101 could have perhaps chosen a more appropriate and effective (in the long run) means for his philosophical statement to the world.

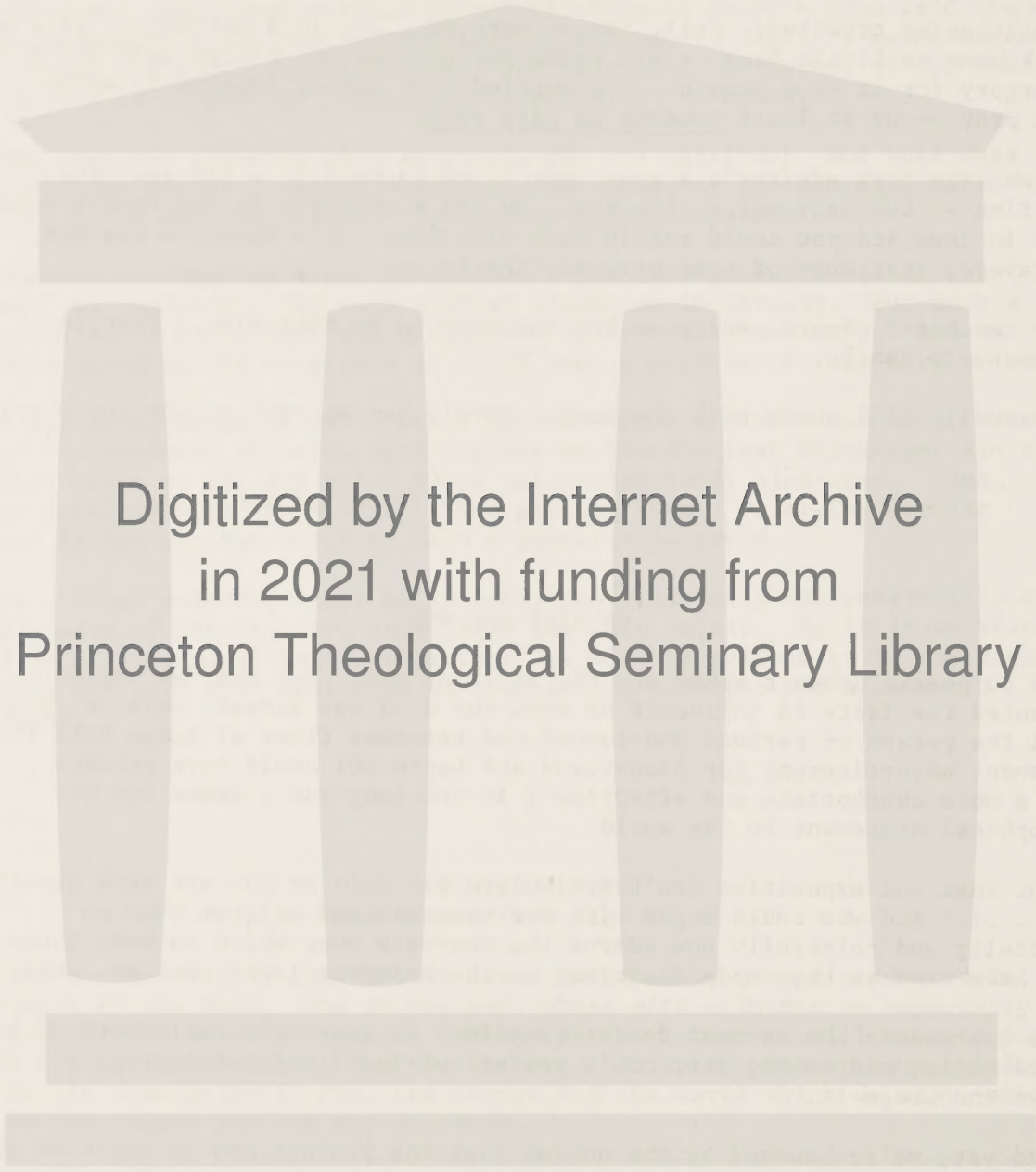
Not that the exposition isn't articulate (it is!) or the art work superb (well. . .). And who could argue with the time-honored epigram that so insightfully and colorfully now adorns the concrete over which so many theologues have trod as they made their way to the basement john? Not we, certainly.

We appreciate the earnest desire (anytime) to scorn the hollowness of once-hallowed halls, and to register one's protest of institutional oppression. In fact, we encourage it.

And yet, we're haunted by the notion that the protest now in question is somehow less inspiring than that of the hungry man who took bread from the Temple to feed himself, somehow less elevating than the man who healed a cripple on the Sabbath.

And nobody could ever accuse David or Jesus of letting the bastards grind them down.

Editorial/jvc



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VIEWPOINT

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In this Post-Election Issue ...

EDITORIAL. . . . . .John V. Carlson
Concerning the years ahead--and the nature of political games.

THE BURYING OF A CANDIDACY. . . . . .Alex Wales
A seminarian's opinion of the meaning of the Nixon landslide.

EXORCISE THE PHAROAH. . . . . Rich Weis
A political statement in poetry.

THE WRATH OF GOD. . . . . .Dan Shute
One student's theological response to the election.

A PRE-ELECTION PRAYER. . . . . A Concerned Soul
Poetic pre-election hopes--reprinted in post-election perspective.

WELTPOLITIK/REALPOLITIK . . . . . .George Fraumann
A Nixon supporter at PTS tells why he voted for the President.

THE CHRISTIAN AND POLITICS. . . . . Stephen Janssen
One student's views on the subject.

REFLECTIONS ON THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION OF 1972. . . . . Manuel Scott
An eloquent statement on the vote against "The Children."

THE STAFF
for this issue

John V. Carlson
Editor

Judi Muller Alex Wales
Dan Shute Michael Livingston

EDITORIAL

To one of his supporters, it would merely be stating the obvious to suggest that George McGovern is a man ahead of his time, and that prophets generally do not do well in their own countries. And to Nixon voters, it would sound like a eulogy at best and sour grapes at the worst to toss a last ounce or two of praise upon one who must have seemed to many like the loveable but pathetic Don Quixote de la Manchia.

And so we do not come to praise the defeated leader -- and yet, neither do we come to bury him, a concept for which we will gladly give credit where credit is due. Nor is it our business to continue a posthumous campaign for McGovern's election by lamely asserting that we don't know how we -- or the country -- will stand another four years of Nixon, Agnew and Co.

In fact, however, the McGovern campaign was predicated and run on deep political and moral issues. The Watergate incident is not resolved just because of Nixon's re-election and the public's refusal to look at it. Isolation and secrecy in government affairs and accountability to all the people are not dead issues simply because many Americans were afraid to hear them. And we hardly need mention that the bombing continues despite the fact that nearly two-thirds of the electorate were fooled into believing that winding down the war is equivalent to ending American involvement in an immoral slaughter and that merely saying "Peace is at hand" actually brings about peace.

Another article in this issue describes the burying of a candidacy. And we must pray that that is all that is buried as of Nov. 8. Instead, there should be a new birth of protest which will proclaim to Richard Nixon -- and the millions who voted for him, for whatever reason -- that there is no honor in the violence, secrecy, and moral irresponsibility which has marked and continues to mark his administration.

President Nixon, in his victory homily from the altar in the oval office, spoke piously of the political game, of which it is better to have played and lost than not to have played at all. Since he insists on pursuing this sporting analogy, we shcuild remind him that the game is not over simply because the quarterback is injured and out of the game, nor is the game won just because one player has managed to wheel and deal for both BoardWalk and Park Place on the Monopoly Board.

But more than this, we should caution Mr. Nixon that this analogy can be pushed to its breaking point with only a minimum of effort. The moral issues still facing Nixon and America for the next four years are not at all like secret plays in a football game; human life and dignity are not at all like pawns on a chess board. And until these facts are brought home to Nixon and to the American public, the job is not done.

jvc

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About this issue: In an effort to promote dialogue within the Seminary Community, we have solicited material from both sides of the recent presidential campaign. Each view expressed represents only the opinions of the name or names of those who signed it. Of course, not every article is representative of the opinions of Viewpoint's ataff; however we felt that both sides should be cited.

THE BURYING OF A CANDIDACY

With the election returns still trickling in from across the entire nation, it is apparent that George McGovern has been buried by the Presidential landslide named Richard Milhous Nixon. In an unprecedented victory representing a two to one vote in behalf of the Republican incumbent, we have a chance to witness a change in the pattern of American party politics. Clearly, party preference has been superceded by the preference of the majority, with people voting, not for their traditional party leanings but for the president, and I assure you - He is the President!

It is difficult to write an analysis of this particular election so soon after the deafening defeat of the candidate whom I favored. "It hurts too much to laugh but I'm too old to cry." (Lincoln, Stevenson-1952, McGovern- 1972) Yet I will try to do justice to some of the major (as I see them) and decisive factors that led to the re-election of the President.

Obviously, masses of people got out of their safe, isolated living-rooms to vote for the candidate of their choice. Their's was a "felt" need to return Mr. Nixon to his position. This fact must be seriously examined by those followers of Mr. McGovern. If anything may be learned from this campaign, it is that one cannot ignore the power and strength of a man who expresses the "felt" needs of the men and women who make up the majority of this nation.

In a campaign that was directed at issues most heavily from the McGovern side of the fence, it is easy to see that it is a wiser strategy to push concepts like patriotism and national strength than it is to attempt to deal with moral and ethical issues. Things like the Watergate Affair, poor economic policies, political dishonesty, a war that is "winding down" do not make a political campaign. When fear of shadows become more real than actual problems, then to speak to real problems only confuses the issuses for the voter. McGovern had to bridge the obstacle of an incumbent president who would not take an active stance. And he chose to deal with a political process without the backing of a political party.

Another factor to examine is the non-appearance of that untapped mountain of power, the youth vote. It was neither powerful nor was it decisive. The myth that a youth vote was a liberal, anti-war vote was crushed along with McGovern. Judging from the heavy turnout across the nation, one is left wondering whether it represents a response by the "over 30" group to the threat of this "Kid Power", or whether it means that the youth vote is more conservative than the youth are willing to admit?

Nixon ran a tight, non-committal campaign with strong party control. McGovern sought to bring back into politics the old air of a populist campaign - going out to the people, ignoring the party, trying to swing his election on the strength of his supporters alone. And the Party, in turn, ignored him. Ever since the Miami convention, the Democratic Party turned in upon itself, concentrating on local elections, state races rather than getting on the McGovern bandwagon. Clearly, the party is as important as it ever was. Only now it's too late for Nov. '72 to do anything about it. Juding from local races, voters willingly voted Nixon and then turned to their party choices. If the coat-tail effect exists, Nixon must have been wearing an Eisenhower jacket (for the uninformed - a WW II style with no coat-tail,) for few, if any, Republicans were elected because of the landslide win.

Issues of peace and new directions could not displace the desire for law,

personal safety, and a return to the past. Nixon, in his non-campaign, gave the American people what they were really seeking, that is, nothing radically different or challenging, nothing but the assurance that things were going all right and getting better. For the dissidents and the fringe groups, Nixon's victory means four more years of frustration after two years of hard and grueling campaigning.

One wonders whether a McGovern victory would have been as revolutionary as many dreamed it would. But now that is a futile effort in day dreaming and a waste of time. A new challenge lies before McGovern people. McGovern sought a camgaign based on righteousness, but as we know those who seek to be righteous are condemned to defeat. The "good guys" don't always have to be right ... or President. A battle for peace and justice is still to be fought, but it may be too easy to let things slide until next time.

It seems that the silent majority got itself together enough to make itself heard. And its voice came as a resounding "Yes" for Richard Nixon. The question now is: "Will the loyal opposition remain both loyal and the opposition?" There are four years to see how it goes, if God gives us that long.

Alex Wales

* * * * * *

Exorcise the Pharoah!
Spider caught
In what he thought
Was his own web.
Limbs entangled,
Slowly strangled,
Just like a fly.

Oppressor, oppressed
Master, slave
Deceiver, deceived -
Exodus frees the slave
But not the master enslaved.
Free them all!
Exorcise the Pharoah!

Rich Weis

* * * * * *

THE WRATH OF GOD

By the time the Viewpoint is in your hands, the terrible will have already happened. An obese and self-important Administration will again occupy the seat of American government. The Nixon Government will quietly concentrate more power into its hands, while George will wish he had asked Political Ambition to osculate his posterior. Being seminarians we may well ask ourselves why God let this calamity overtake us.

A gruff professor of mine back at university used to say each nation gets the good it deserves. Could it be that the United States has gotten the political leader it deserves? I fear this is so. Where is God, the champion of the oppressed?

Why is it that an arrogant and plutocratic nation is allowed to suck life from the earth? In the eyes of other nations the United States makes John the Elder's Whore of Babylon look like Queen Victoria.

Unfortunately the time is past when we can escape the corporate guilt of America. We all, you and I, have been implicated, the black and the white, the rich and the poor, the just and the unjust. On the national level we have certified the status quo, and shouldered personal responsibility for the war; it is our war now, not Nixon's war, or the Pentagon's war. We have been so afraid of losing our comfort, of jeopardizing our mortgaged home, of seeing who we really are as a nation, that we have eagerly collected the lies which comfort cruel men. We lied when we said we armed ourselves to forestall Soviet domination. We lied when we said we were the bastion of the Free World, imprisoned as we were in our wealth. We lie to each other now if we suggest our present domestic policy is anything but cruel and ruinous. The extent of evil in America is eschatological, and the cleansing of America will have to be apocalyptic. As in the days of Noah, we will go on eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until sudden destruction visits us.

Surely the redeemed community of God will suffer, as it is suffering now, more than our secular society which has no hope. That it is God our Father who is punishing us, and not some capricious fate, is no small consolation. Thus our national song will have to praise God for his judgment!

Deep calls to deep
in the roar of Your cataracts;
All Your breaks and Your billows
pass over us.

Dan Shute

* * * * * *

ELECTION PRAYER

O Lord,
Help us to find the way
Thru the tunnels of black and grey,
Thru serpentine snarls of chicanery
An unfaltering light we crave to see.

What wave length, what frequency
Will tune us in - O, Lord, to thee?
Man can soar thru time and space,
But can we save the human race?

"Concerned Soul"

* * * * * *

WELTPOLITIK-REALPOLITIK

"War is an extension of foreign policy." - Clausewitz

While the lack of compassion in Realpolitik is repulsive, one must acknowledge that it is the way nations see war.

And more dangerous is the Weltpolitik of emotion.
War through political analysis with limited objectives has proved itself more humane than the great blundering "Wars to end all Wars."

There is no place in politics for emotion.

Because it "shouldn't be like this" alters nothing. Irrespective of self-righteousness there were two issues in the Presidential campaign.

Obviously the issues were foreign and domestic policy.

I supported Richard Nixon because of his foreign policy.

For the past twenty or so years our policy consistently was one of containment by military deterrent. In the past two years the Nixon administration began the introductionof a new system of diplomacy. Simply, it is diplomacy through economic trade. Hopefully the United States, Russia, China, Europe and the third world can reach a point where all sides can see it is to their advantage to ease tension. Negotiations by mutual advantage is far safer than negotiations by fear.

I feel McGovern's radical stance on foreign commitments would have thrown this highly complex system into an uproar, and set this new policy back a number of years. We are Rome, and whatever we do sends political ramifications throughout the world. The world cannot afford the United States to be naive.

After all, Russia did invade Czechoslovakia only two years ago.

While I found McGovern's domestic policy highly appealing to my Christian ethics, I realized that he could never implement them through the legislative body. He has alienated not only most moderates, but half his own party. The sixties scared the majority of people in this country and they desire a return to normalcy. The next four years aren't going to produce any radical change. And it wouldn't matter who was elected. Furthermore, because Nixon has a "conservative" label he can push liberal legislation effectively. His own party won't fight him, and the liberal democrats can't vote against what they scream for. For instance, the wage-price freeze was instituted without all the conservatives bitching. It appeared he had to do it, because well, Nixon is against economic controls isn't he?

So brighten up my friends, Nixon is a pragmatist and no fool.

George Fraumann

THE CHRISTIAN AND POLITICS

We heard a lot during the election campaign concerning the role of the Christian vis a vis for whom one should vote, especially in relation to the most important national election, that of the President. Frankly, I am a little tired of it. And I think those concerned with their role should hear what is, admittedly on this campus, a minority viewpoint.

The basic premise which irks me is that the Christian should vote for a social-activist/liberal candidate who will attempt to right the wrongs and help the downtrodden through massive government intervention. He will help the blacks, the anti-military-industrial complexionists, women, poor, welfare recipients and the malnutritioned. It is almost as if this person is to be a latter-day model of the Lord Himself who helped the downtrodden and the oppressed, and associated with the lower, unpopular classes of society. However, Jesus was God, or the Son of God, or whatever view of his divinity you choose to take. A candidate for public office is not a deity, although his followers may view him as one.

I am not against aiding and helping all of the above mentioned groups. Love of others and appreciation of the severity of their condition must come from all the American people. But the proper place to emphasize Christ's demands on our lives is not in the political arena by exhorting others as Christians to vote for the "right" candidate, but in the churches and pulpits of this country.

Our government grows ever more strong, under any modern Chief Executive. The American people have been led to believe since 1933 that strong government intervention can wipe out poverty, racism, slums and all the other ills of this country while ringing in the millenium (some would say the Christian millenium) of leveled incomes, closed tax-loopholes, abolished oil-depletion allowances, and equality for all. This is no more true than the idea that massive government intervention can prevent small, impolite countries from falling to Communism. That is a boondoggle that practically all Americans believe has been a waste of time, money and, most importantly, lives. I contend that any attempt to lead people to vote for more government intervention or control, especially by appealing to a person's Christian conscience (obviously a valid method on this campus, supposedly), is wrong.

Jesus did not come to earth as a fire-brandishing, Zealot Messiah such as the Jews were expecting. He did not say, "Let's take over the Roman Empire and use tax money to alleviate all wrongs and injustices." No, he said that the feeling of wanting to do something like this, the desire to obey his commandments, must come from within, through belief in Him and the belief that what he was asking was worth doing.

We were supposed to vote for the candidate who is against fat-cat interests, millionaires and all others whose money supposedly keeps this country from helping the underprivileged because said money is kept in their grubby, dirty capitalistic hands. Admittedly, most of these men probably have a perverse and evil love of money, which Jesus comments on when he tells the rich young man to sell all his possessions. However, I believe Jesus feels sorry for him because of his love of money, not simply because he happens to be rich. The duty of any Christian, but especially the duty of a minister in a parish situation, is clear: NOT to urge votes for a candidate urging the rich be punished by being forced to give their money to a "wise" government which can supposedly invest it better than they can; no, a minister's duty is to cause well-off people to realize they must destroy their love of money and use it in the service of the church, not for padding on the pews, but for missions that the church should have to those with,

in effect, to clean, and to those who are naked, hungry and in prison.

Admittedly, many churches do have missions such as those described above, but these missions do not have the funding of a Job Corps or a Head Start program.

Love of others implies to me, not only a helping of others, but a willingness to protect others. I believe that the primary duty of government is to protect the citizenry through laws, a court system, and some sort of policing system. The helping and aiding of others is the primary duty of the church along with its corrollary primary duty of making people realize this is what Christ demands of us.

By placing power in the hands of the Federal government the church is shirking its duty. And it is also saying, "Now you administer the welfare, the poverty programs. We will urge people to vote for reform candidates, but beyond that we will contribute nothing." In this way the church assuages its conscience.

There are examples of groups which do not demand aid from the government; the Mormons have an elaborate system of welfare, which unfortunately is designed for helping only other Mormons. To my knowledge there are few, if any, Mormons on public assistance.

The church, then, and all prospective parish ministers and seminarians have to realize that the church is responsible for all of the social-welfare programs the government now has. The only responsibility the church has to government is to make sure it stays separate from it, and to make sure that the government guarantees the fundamental rights which the American system promises us. The fundamental mistake made by the social-activist/liberals is that the Declaration of Independence not only affirms that all men are created equal, but that all men are guaranteed equal happiness. However, while I, too, affirm that all men are created equal, the Declaration of Independence guarantees "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." Whether all men will achieve happiness is a question about which the Declaration remains silent. It does not guarantee or demand that the government is responsible for seeing to it that all men are equally happy.

On the other hand, the church can provide the happiness, security and life and liberty through Christ's Gospel by preaching it and by putting it into action.

It is time to stop deploring the state of the government and through this deploring urge people to be elected to the government in the name of Christ.

It is time for the church to realize that it must take over the ministrations of the government to those without and it is time for Christians to stop saying that they have done their duty of helping others because the candidate or particular party they vote for is the "party of the people." Jesus Christ does not call us as believers to vote correctly and salve our consciences. His Gospel should cause us to examine our consciences to ask what we of, and in the church can do simply beyond excercising our right to vote. For the Chief Executives, said Harry Truman, the "buck stops here". For the Christian, when it comes to helping others, the buck cannot be passed, even in a voting booth.

Stephen H. Janssen

REFLECTIONS ON THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION OF 1972
A vote against "The Children"

In musing over the tragic, but imminent defeat of George McGovern to that reptilian trickster of American polity, Richard Milhous Nixon, one is not only deeply saddened, but one is also insatiably puzzled. And at the core of this puzzlement lies a disturbing and persistent question; and that question simply is: How long will America continue to "vote" against "the children?" But what do we mean by "the children?" Are we refering to those thousands upon thousands of Vietnamese children, slaughtered by American bombs bearing the inscription of "Vietnamization" or, "in quest of an honorable piece." Are we refering to those wretched children of Appalachia, who have horrendously become the forgotten "waste material" of a country that is more concerned about selling wheat to Russia than providing their hollow stomachs with bread? Or, are we refering to those scores of black and brown and red children whose tender souls and minds are constantly being violated and destroyed by the devastating tentacles of that insidious Octopus known as American Racism?....

While most assuredly including these children, these piteous candidates of a dubious posterity, "the children" that we are refering to this evening are "the children" whose wombs are couched in the Image of God, reflected in the yearning of the human spirit.

More specifically, "the children" that we are speaking of are "the children" of Hope, undaunted Faith, unconditional Love, Human Dignity, Harmonious Peace, and Spiritual Sensitivity! ... But why are these noble and perrenial ideals of man looked upon as being mere children? ... In response to this question, I contend that these ideals can be viewed as "children" primarily because their full beauty and strength is contingent upon their opportunity at maturation. Hence, the maturation of these ideals, of these children, in our lifetime, will be soley dependent upon how faithfully we, as a human community, choose to actualize them in our lifestyle.

But then, I can hear voices coming from the hallowed courts of Seminaries and Universities across the country, voices coming from the credentialized humanitarians of this society, voices self-righteously asking "Who would dare vote against these ideals that you speak of, who would dare vote against "these children?"

In reply, allow me to briefly state, that any nation that chooses as its leader a man who is exclusively concerned about the super-rich, the super-freightened, and the super-fragmented, is a nation that categorically votes against "the children" of national cohesiveness and domestic harmony. Any mind-set that embraces the cowardly euphemisms of "gradualism", "law and order," and "busing," at the expense of depriving thousands of blacks and browns to live and learn respectfully, is a "vote" against "the children" of human dignity and common decency. And any "state of consciousness" that never rises above the illusions of the dollar or the deceptions of status symbols, is a vote against "the children" of human worth and concrete happiness.

But then finally, I can hear voices coming from the corridors of insufficient and inconsistent Liberalism, voices nervously saying, "But we didn't vote for Richard Nixon, surely, you must not be refering to us as voting against these children of hope, harmony,and love, and human dignity!"

And to these "liberal" voices, let me simply add, that while the election is over, "the voting" still goes on! And I really wonder my white brothers and sisters of the cloth, and would ask that you ponder the thought, are your everyday lives, here at Princeton Seminary, and elsewhere,are they reflective of a "vote" for or against "the children?"

Manuel Scott, Jr.
Association of Black Seminarians

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DEADLINE for the next issue of Viewpoint - 8:30 am, Monday Nov. 27, 1972. We will accept articles, stories, poems, sermons, etc - as well as creative suggestions for improving the paper. John V. Carlson, 205 Loetscher Place, A4, P-W. 452-1793.

VIEWPOINT

Volume X, No. 3 November 29, 1972

In this issue . . .

A DIALOGUE ON VIEWPOINT ..... And a LETTER TO THE EDITOR
A discussion on the nature and purpose of a campus opinion publication, with Harri Hedgbeth, Rollin Kirk, and Viewpoint Editor Jack Carlson - along with a letter proposing concrete suggestions.

ALSO ...

THE PLACE OF CALVIN, JESUS AND MCGOVERN IN POST-ELECTION REFORMS .... Timothy M. Njoya
A doctoral student responds to articles in Viewpoint; "post-election" issue.

ROBIN MORGAN AND THE SEMINARY "MEN" ..... Steve Owen
Some personal and incisive observations.

THE STAFF

John V. Carlson
Editor
Dan Shute
Judi Muller
Alex Wales
Dave Wiseman
Members of ABS Academic Committee

A DIALOGUE ON VIEWPOINT

The publication of an opinion journal is a task which can bring both praise and criticism - and reaction to Viewpoint's first two issues has been mixed. We have attempted thus far to present a forum of opinion, where members of the Seminary Community may come into dialogue on issues and hurts which concern them. And while some have availed themselves of the opportunity, the community at large has not done so, thus leaving the editor with a virtual dearth of high-quality material from which to select articles for publication, as well as some pointed- and justified - criticism of what does appear in the paper.

It is my desire as Editor to deal in a responsible way with criticism, and to listen for suggestion to improve quality. The following discussion is a portion of a dialogue held last week between Harri Hedgbeth, Rollin Kirk and myself. We discussed a wide range of specific topics, each relating in one way or another to student opinion, its expression (or lack of expression), and Viewpoint's responsibility to address the issues. Harri is a middler, and Rollin a senior. Each has been active in various aspects of seminary life; each is deeply concerned politically and theologically. I would like for students to be able to share in our conversation - by reading this much of it, and then responding.

Harri began the discussion by expressing some negative feelings about the first two issues of Viewpoint, as related to the quality of the material accepted for publication, the continuity of the material, the editorial policy. Rollin picked up the discussion at this point.

RK: I feel that the students who really care what's happening could share vicariously in this discussion. Two things I would like to know Jack, are one: if this discussion is threatening to you personally, and secondly, what kind of terms would be your general editorial policy?

JC: Well, I have a built-in defensive mechanism, same as a lot of people. I am glad to get your response and interest, Harri, in what's going on. A lot of people will say "I had a negative response to some things in the first issue." I'll say, "Could you put them in writing and submit them for publication?" The answer comes, "No, I don't have time." For me it is a very slow process to get things going. I need the help of interested and creative people to help put it together.

HH: I have some feelings about your point of view on the scope of what Viewpoint can do. And maybe that's where some of the negative feelings are coming from. I think that you have to sort of sit down and say, "These are things that we can include in this magazine -- and if it's going to be political in terms of this campus, let it be political in terms of this campus. If it's going to be personal commentary, let it be that. When it goes in a hundred directions, or six directions, which is about what it is, with no continuity to it, people just sort of turn off.

JC: OK, let me just respond to that much. I sympathize with that. Because I came into the job fairly late -- they didn't hold the interviews till the second week of October -- plus trying to get in contact with the

groups whom I thought had something to say, and still do, plus getting a little publicity out, and getting the first trickles of information back in -- then it was my intention to have the first issue be a kind of hodge-podge, in the sense of being a general sounding of what some people at least, are interested in. The second issue which came out last week, was intended to deal with the election. And I felt this was something that was important enough to take some time to do. I have in mind, particularly for the second semester, to have some specific issues dealing with some of the important topics on campus.

HH: Well, I think the basic thing I want to say is that there is a great deal of negative feeling around regarding Viewpoint. And I think it's finally going to be expressed in some very creative ways. There's already abroad in the land work to express that anger. It is anger, I think, or at least dismay; that at least to me, and to many people I think, Viewpoint, at this point, is not broad based, if that's what you're trying to point to. Or else, it's just not getting to where people hurt -- which is maybe it.

RK: It sounds, Harri, like what you're saying is that Viewpoint, could not be effective unless the material -- I'm not sure about the style -- unless the issues it addressed were critically important to a significant portion of the student body.

HH: That's right.

RK: Which brings up one question -- I know that the issues which are critical to you and me are not the issues of a sizeable percentage of the student body. I don't have any way of putting numerical values on this -- but I think it reflects ...

HH: Well, I'll tell you what the political issues are on this campus right now -- It's how you minister to a dead church. It's the only issue which goes everywhere in the Seminary, that I can find.

RK: "In" or "to"?

HH: In and to. It comes out with those who are "social/action/gospel" and with the more conservative people -- that we don't know how to minister in or to the church. And that is the most consistently volatile issue that I can see. Another issue -- a growing issue -- is how do you worship when you feel the depression and disparity of your world? And that's a big topic. But, to me, an issue of Viewpoint on how to minister -- outside -- outside of what you're studying in these courses -- but how they're practical in terms of your world.

JC: You're saying things that I can appreciate and that I can understand, and I really am glad that you're telling me. A lot of people do a lot of grousing and then don't follow it up. Do you have any suggestion ...

HH: Well, I'd have to think about it. But, in Dan Migliore's class on Theology of Hope, the discussion ends up here almost every time we go: how you make the question of hope effective in the church -- a dead church. How do you talk about enclaves of the past and enclaves of the future in a church that is an enclave of death? And to me that is something that is solid -- that really speaks to where people are here. But the question of the election to me was a dead issue by the time

that paper came out, if you want my honest opinion about it. I was ready to talk about how you go on fighting, how do you keep saying "No" to a system of oppression and militarism, when you're at the point of despair. I'm sure that there were other people who were rejoicing, but nonetheless, to discuss the pros and cons of McGovern and Nixon, when it was all over, seems almost like a slap in the face to McGovern, and a slap on the back for Nixon.

JC: We had hoped to have a pre-election issue, but the lateness of getting started made it difficult to get going quickly enough. I did feel that the election should not go by unnoticed.

RK: I've got something rattling around in my cage right now. We talked, about, Harri, the potential for a real literary journal, which I had sort of set on one side of a dialectic -- and we have Viewpoint, perhaps being journalistic, versus literary, poetic (in the very broad sense, Aristotelian sense). /This poetic sense/ as opposed to perhaps polemic. You know, I think the campus may be big enough for both.

JC: I would think so.

RK: And right now, I'm wondering ... at first, I felt, Harri, that we were talking about something Viewpoint has failed -- let's "subvert it by going off, rather than giving it anything worthwhile. "

HH: That's part of it. That is part of it.

RK: But I think that's like killing a bird that could be saved. And I wonder if it's possible to get some kind of thing going, whereby the creativity that we're in contact with can be shared with Viewpoint, so we can deal a bit more with polemics, getting down to this issue of ministry which I think the Seminary has managed to duck at every turn. And the issues of repression and authority -- I was just thinking of the many creative people who are really quite stifled, and who fear that Viewpoint wouldn't be an outlet for their creativity. People who are good friends of mine -- and I'm sure of yours too -- people like Rich Fennig, John Wild, Lev Sherman, David Stuyvesant, Galen Yoder -- people like this who are really the salt of the earth, of this campus, but for the maintenance of their own life, demanded that they exit. I think this is an issue that Viewpoint and a literary journal could really address. And that raises another question for me, Jack, that of editorial freedom. Since the Administration is the ultimate source of funding, and to a great extent, selection of editor, how far could you go in really pushing the issue of what we are dealing with?

JC: I don't know. Of course, like the situation with the student representatives, the one offering me the job was ultimately Dr. McCord. After I had been interviewed by the editorial board -- that surprised me. I had the interview with them, and what they told me at that time was that as editor, I have complete freedom. What they understood as complete freedom and what others understand by it, may be two different things. I haven't had to fight that yet.

RK: If I were convinced, Jack, that you really wanted to let Viewpoint become an organ of student power, like it was when Wayne Frey was editor, by being the source of publication for the reports of the Viewpoint Task

Force on Priorities, and raising the matters of students and their own destiny and the question of ministry and the church, which I agree, must be dealt with, before it's too late.

JC: Let me comment on that. I see my job as editor as being responsible for getting the paper out, for letting it be a forum for people who want to say something . Now, I would certainly be willing and interested to hear about or to take part in something such as the Task Force on Priorities. I don't see that it's my job to start that, at least not right now. It may be that if I were to hold the job for a longer period of time, it might be different. But if there are people who want to get involved in a particular project of this kind, then I can say that Viewpoint is available for people who have something that they want to say. Am I making sense or am I off base?

HH: Personally, I think you're off base. At the present time, there is so much repression in the seminary, that people are anesthesized, to the point that they won't say anything. And so if you really present them with a forum on enclaves of death I think they would discuss that, because they have to live with that, and they have to work with that.

. . . . . .

RK: I really don't mind so much having a variety of themes and styles and topics and subjects, but I really feel badly when the quality is not as good as it could be. But that's nothing that you have any control over.

JC: Well, to a certain extent.

RK: Only by refusing to print.

HH: But at this point, you're liable to be refusing to print. Punta.

RK: Until and unless the people who can say something in a literate way can be prevailed upon to submit it.

HH: Jack, what I'm trying to get at is that a lot of people who are literate on campus and who have really strong points of view on a lot of things have been diverted away from Viewpoint as a channel, not all because of your production, but becasue of last year and the year before. They have a lot of negative background to work against. But the first two issues this year haven't really helped either, to break the image of an illiterate paper. Like this year, I pulled out some of my stuff from last year, some theological piéces on women. And I was ready to send them -- just sort of contemplated it because they are violent piéces, and I'm sure there would be a whole hell of a lot of negative criticism kicked up as soon as they were printed. No question about it.

RK: Of you or of Jack?

HH: Of me. And of Viewpoint. But after I saw the first Viewpoint, I just sort of set them back in the drawer. This set up against these other pieces that are in here is just more than I can deal with. I mean that if there were four pieces in there that were really political, and I mean deadly political, then I put in a piece on women in theology in a political way, then it wouldn't be so hard, because then the criticism

would be diverse. But right now, if I put in my piece that says God is black, lesbian, and female, people would go wild on this campus, because there's simply no context for it.

RK: I can kind of second that. This summer I was working on a piece on civil disobedience, relfecting on the experience of you who were in Harrisburg in March, and this has to do with the national union and the first action that was taken by the union and my own personal philosophical thinking on civil disobedience and politics. But compared to "Princeton Secular Seminary" it just isn't in the same boat at all. . .

The discussion continued from here for some time - we didn't notice when the tape ran out. We ranged over several areas - including the rat on Hodge Hall floor, for whom I now have a little more respect. But all differences of opinion aside for the moment, I believe several valuable things came out of our interview, in that we identified some problems which must be addressed.

In the first place, it seems to me that Harri is correct in saying that, at least to a certain extent, students are anesthesized. This is a problem for a journal of opinion, since the existence of such a publication is predicated - and must survive on - the open expression of deeply felt views. Harri's choice of words is particularly appropriate here, for a person under anesthesia - by definition - feels nothing at all. To this end, Viewpoint would like to pledge itself to tapping creative, feeling, and imaginative people for contributions.

Secondly, I believe it is in the best interest of honesty and journalism to continue to encourage participation by representation of both sides of the various political and theological fences. However, Rollin's point regarding editorial freedom is well taken! It becomes incumbent upon Viewpoint - and ultimately, the Seminary community itself - to address those issues which are critical, and to press them in a responsible manner. If some people have been anesthesized to numbness, those of us with feeling left can try to share it. An illustration of just this point appears later in this issue - Steve Owen's article on "Robin Morgan and the Seminary Men" is itself an expression which registers a deep sense of protest to the numbed apathy and defensive tactics of some people. By the same token, when someone does share a bit of feeling - even if misguided or disagreeable - it behooves us to at least consider an appropriate response, even if the response is ultimately silence.

But in all of this, the real issue which emerges is that of student power. Even granting a certain measure of apathy characteristic of the age in which we are living, and the relative non-role played by Viewpoint in the last year or so, how many students are actively engaged in the struggle for control of their own destinies? How many have ever allowed the question to cross their minds - let alone lodge there for a time? Personally, the struggle is admittedly new for me, and I can remember times when I felt, well, it's only for three years. . . And now in a position with some potential for power, I find myself groping for ways in which to make some constructive use of Viewpoint. Negative feedback is helpful, but more than that is needed. What is needed is the desire to make Viewpoint a truly open and honest forum for dialogue, which I think the Seminary needs.

Which brings this personal essay to its final point: While I can promise

a greater degree of editorial initiative Viewpoint is, in the end, not my paper. It does not belong to me but to the complex, amorphous, but real constituency known as the Seminary Community. And it seems to me that we owe it to each other to use our diversity in the re-creation of a viable opinion journal or run the risk of watching diversity drift slowly and helplessly into divisiveness.

* * * * * * * *

Dear Jack,

This is the promised letter! After our conversation of last week I was convinced that there are still possibilities for the Viewpoint. The two ideas that came into my head as we talked seem more possible and valuable than they did then. Perhaps a restatement of them for your readers would be advisable. I would be interested in hearing comments.

My first suggestion is that Viewpoint be responsible for a forum discussion for the seminary community - (perhaps on ministering to people in a multiphasic world) - From this discussion you could request that advocates of differing points of view write articles for a special issue on the forum topic. It might be possible to get faculty people to participate with relevant articles, too.

The second possibility seems to hold even more promise as a revitalizer. The issues of Viewpoint would be led off by a short article solicited from a prominent practitioner of religion or of a social movement / William Stringfellow, Sister Elizabeth, Dan Berrigan, Gilkey/. When articles were received they would be passed on to persons representing various views on the campus - ABS, PSW, International Students, Theological Forum, etc. - for their comments and reactions in the form of companion articles.

My feeling is that issues of this type would give Viewpoint wider readership and more credibility with the community.

Sincerely,

Harri Hedgbeth

THE PLACE OF CALVIN, JESUS and McGOVERN in POST-ELECTION REFORMS

It is an unfortunate feature of human nature that we should be easily carried by extremes of circumstances. By nature a conscientious observer is carried away by the view expressed by Alex Wales, Dan Smith, George Fraumann, Stephen Janssen and Manuel Scott, Jr. in the Nov. 15 issue of Viewpoint. In response to their political cynicism and lamentation, I would like to put their views in line with Christ Jesus and John Calvin, for their actions are in some way relevant to this seminary's theological orientation, especially to post-election issues.

THEOLOGY AND POLITICS. Any political theology that cannot ensure implementation of its ethical values in a particular form of human encounter is insufficient. A true associate of Jesus or Calvin is a Christian whose compatriots are all those saints in America, Asia or elsewhere in the world who fight for the rights of peasants and workers. Though I shared many issues with McGovern "radicals" and pitied those of the bandwagon of Nixon's landslide, sharing issues did not imply that I wanted McGovern to win. On the contrary it is the issues that McGovern raised that coincided with those raised by reformers in the past, and cannot be resolved by a leader in the kind of position McGovern wanted to be in. I pitied those who felt desperately of hopeless and hence took "the lesser of the two evils". But there were others who took McGovern not because of his projected purposes in the White House, but because he symbolized their frustrations.

McGovern set himself as a dissident version of the original version of the American dream, i.e. the image of a Super-Specie. His welfare concept emanated from the urge to save from disintegration the capitalist principles of exploitation of man by man. Economic relief is not political release. It only wards off human struggle prolonging the ongoing process of death amongst those exploitation has caused to suffer. The weakness of guilt-motivated reforms is that the leaders cannot afford the liberty of endangering the system on which their power rests. Guilt-conscience is a masking motif, dependent upon fear and incapacity to break from one's incoherent heritage which he criticizes. In guilt-conscience the enemy is within one's self feeding on the dynamic spirit that should have gone for reforms. McGovern was valuable for American nationalism but lacked the kind of material that Nixon possessed, thus ingredients that turn nationalism into imperialism. He lacked the reified emanation of the mysterious and over-whelming power of a Master-Race, and hence failed in his appeal to the instincts of American conscience.

CALVINIST POLITICS. Calvin was a reformer, equally articulate, like McGovern, but more practical. His politics was based upon recognition of social injustice and demands for reforms, demands that Christianity and politics be bent to liberate people. He recognized the government in its brutal forms only in order to invest it with the WORD and thus make the WORD brutally and firmly authoritative in the World. His theology committed him to take the earthly kingdom and to transform it depending almost wholly on the masses. Like Christ, he proved most sensitive to strains of social change and most ready to experiment with underground organization and radical ideology. He used his extraordinary capacity for organizing men to change them, sending them into battle "against Satan and his allies - even when those allies turned to be kings and noblemen." For Calvin, Christian discipline was more an instrument of justice in the "Holy Commonwealth" than law and order per se.

Why did Calvin excel McGovern in the use of the WORD to move a medieval "silent majority" largely composed of inactive Christians? Calvin organized

the oppressive Christian culture and used it to destroy itself, and organized the common man for sustained political activities. McGovern organized no common men for any action. Calvin was not a CANDIDATE fighting for battle of inclusion into the nobility and decedent system but rather a moving factor in social change. The crisis of McGovern would be defined as acquiescence to his heritage of masked incoherences which his defeat helped to reveal, whereas Calvin had the capacity to break from his past heritage.

JESUS POLITICS. Though Jesus was not as educated as Calvin or McGovern, he nevertheless excelled both in his capacity to integrate his new ideology with practical life. Like a reformer, he shared the anxieties and alienation of the dispossessed and therfore joined in the work of reconstruction. Jesus defied the Pharisees and Priests; Calvin did not compromise with Princes; but McGovern flattered the Middle-Class. Jesus was not a CANDIDATE striving for entry into the establishment but established his presence as a vital power in the lay-movement to transform historical processes. He changed people without causing as much bloodshed as Calvin, though himself, Stephen,James and others associated with Him lost their lives in the movement. Unfortunately his movement crystalized into a fixed body call Church.

Jesus gave sanction to law breakers when he broke the Ten Commandments and forgave those who broke them. His solidarity with the outcasts and sinners proved that these were not fools and nothings but human beings. He healed on Sabbath. He kept silent during his trial in contempt to court before Pilate. Finally, He blasphemed by calling God his own Father. He did all this contrary to oppressive laws but according to his concept of justice. Jesus refused to stand as a perfect Rabbi inside a stagnant law-container while he could find wholeness and life outside.

P.T.S. POLITICS. In the post-election issue some students lamented over the burial of a "Candidacy" and others celebrated over the landslide of the incumbent. Alex Wales' lamentation fails to say which issues of "loyal opposition" he wants to "remain loyal and opposition," and hence makes a mockery of reformation by hiding in a clean neither-hot-nor-cold ideology instead of coming out like Jesus or Calvin.

Dan Shute, lamenting over abortive reforms makes a scandal of Christianity when he says, "Surely the redeemed community of God will suffer." He forgot that (1) his redeemer - God needs redemption, (2) the oppressed have never shared the reception of his "community" (3) and that his "redeemed community" makes enormous profits by afflicting the unredeemed. When he says, " We all, you and I have been implicated, the black and white, the rich and poor," he makes a more serious political blunder. The fact that blacks and poor as subjected by law to obey their masters and pay taxes does not implicate them in the crimes of wars that keep them poor and enslaved. Their submission to extraction of taxes is due to the fear of other forms of violence like imprisonment or death.

S. Janssen proposes that McGovern would not have helped "the blacks, women, poor" etc. A capitalist monopolitic system has no propensity to provide enough ambulances and bandages for those it wounded otherwise it will lose profits. To recognize that, is the first step to a socialist revolution and I am glad Janssen got the message. A socialist ideology would be pure nonsense if McGovern reforms could succeed in America. Welfare is the result of extreme inequities and it is anti-liberation. It diverts the victim's attention to political power. Janssen continues to reaffirm what white missionaries said to Asians and Africans,"Jesus did not come to earth as a

fire brandishing, Zealot Messiah . . . and did not say 'let's take over the Roman Empire'" though this is not what a Nixon's supporter would have wished us to understand he justified the critics of Christianity who say "Jesus was too other-worldly to be of any earthy use," and others who say "Jesus and Christianity is the opium of the masses." This is a distortion of Jesus who whipped the extortioners and commanded his disciples to sell their cloaks and buy swords, and did not surrender until Peter cut an aggressors ear. Janssen also says "love implies protecting the citizenry through laws " etc, forgetting that some laws are unjust, make some citizens the possessions of others, and help the masters keep the "possessions" from any attempt to become human.

G. Fraumann says, "I support Richard Nixon because of his foreign policy," and in the same breath says "Negotiation by mutual advantage is far safer than negotiation by fear" and believes that the Third World can negotiate with U.S. to its advantage. Countriesthat meet all the American requirements for peace, Philippines, Korea, Brazil, Liberia and others, their elites negotiated by selling their people to U.S. business and in return received protection from the fury of their people through increased military violence. Negotiations, however well supplied with bombs and tear gas cannot be substitutes for necessary reforms. When the Third World is like Russia and China there can be mutual negotiations but Nixon is fighting to prevent that type of orientation from occurring anywhere else. Moreover, if we take MacNamara and Rogers seriously, U.S. foreign policy is nothing but a successor of Old British Mercantile policy out of which grew slave trade, slavery and subsequently racism. Aphatheid in South Africa grew from the same protectionist policies against the politics of liberation. In fact, justice can be quite the opposite of laws and policies as Jesus demonstrated.

Manuel Scott, Jr. has expressed poetically what he had seen in McGovern as true hope amid the vacum left by defeat. He returns to a mystical concept which lumps together multiple clevages that hurt "the children" "whose wombs are couched in the image of God." No wonder the Post-Election theologians have no issues except a spiritual sublimation of election heat. None of our P.T.S. theologians has suggested any clues for future transformation and hence have forced me to see no links between them and Jesus or Calvin. McGovern said, "conservatives are people who worship dead heroes," and hence if our conservative seminary has come to think of Calvin and Jesus as dead heroes, lets stop talking about human struggle and summon up every member to service of lamentation and celebration.

PROPHETIC THEOLOGY. After burying the hope with the candidacy the victims of subjection and racism will continue to bear more wounds under "democratic freedom" and "Christian love," the results of which cannot be checked by love, aid, charity, welfare or reforms without a transformation of the whole society, from top to bottom, spiritually and physically, and since McGovern was not ready for that, America is meanwhile safer without him in the White House. Safer but not saved. Hence, Janssen is right when he says, "the constitution does not guarantee or demand that government is responsible for seeing to it that all men are equally happy." The unhappy mankind are duty-bound to obtain their happiness by any means, even when it upsets the happy few. The unhappy who lack equipment for war, especially in the American ghetto will wait for the kairos when the conditions are so intolerable that they no longer care to live and can do anything, commit suicide or spill their fury into the streets, provoking the police to shoot them. Riots will leave the happy society, U.S., too fiercely guarded, too strong and diffused to be reformed. It will either age and disintegrate like Roman Empire, or

will explode like Russian Empire, leaving behind the greatest ruins in history. You delay the unmasking of violent incoherences until kairos arrives when it saturates itself with racial violence and inequities, and explodes itself trying to save itself. If such is the direction of our religious mood, our theological performances are inescapably estranged from theological and philosophical direction which Jesus and Calvin walked.

Timothy M. Njoya

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ROBIN MORGAN AND THE SEMINARY "MEN"

A few weeks ago I was feeling pretty hopeful about the Church and the parish ministry for the first time in quite a while. Our minister had courageously taken a moral stand in support of George McGovern from the pulpit the previous Sunday. The night before I'd heard about the importance of parish work from a Union grad ex-pastor, and I'd heard the same thing from an ex-Alinsky worker that morning.

I was on my way with my two-year-old daughter to hear Robin Morgan, being a little scared but looking forward to it, as I assumed the rest of the Seminary was. But on the way I dropped off a friend who wanted to see her husband play football for the P-W Warriors. There I ran into another friend from Alexander who told me that football was the biggest thing going at Alexander this year. As if this wasn't surprising enough two weeks away from an incredibly important presidential election, I soon heard that many Seminary men were displeased about Robin Morgan's presence on campus, and that the Alexander Alligators' victory celebration was to be partly in mock honor of her visit! Here was a woman who had edited a book used in more than one Seminary course, who was not only not welcomed but not even listened to by many men.

My temporary enthusiasm for the Church largely vanished, I took my surprise and disgust with me to hear Robin Morgan. What can I say? She is an incredibly intelligent, low-keyed, even-keeled woman. The scope of her insight is amazing. Her forthrightness is refreshing, especially here. Most Seminary-type people are cautious and almost reverent when talking about Roman Catholicism or Marxism, lest they offend anyone. Robin simply said what she thought. Add her sense of humor, and it was a joy to listen to her.

I took my enthusiasm out with me and went over to Alexander to find my friend. I didn't find him, but instead found a "Robin Is Here" sign with some graffiti on it. One person wrote, "Guard your balls." (Hope for Church gone.) Underneath another had written, "Don't worry. She doesn't want them." However that second comment was meant, it certainly is true. Women like Robin Morgan who are interested in fulfilling themselves as human are not interested in men who find their identity in their balls.

Why was Robin Morgan so threatening to so many men? It seems to me that many Seminary men whether presently married or not envision themselves in a parish with their wives pleasantly ensconced in a very limiting social role. To them, Robin Morgan says, "I won't fit in that role, and I don't think any

woman who wants to fulfill herself can limit herself to that role." So they're threatened.

But for me it is precisely because I am a husband, a father, and the father of a daughter that Robin Morgan's visit was so meaningful. As a husband, my marriage grows as my wife develops more and more her own identity independent of her relationship with me. She has more and more to give and our love becomes more mutual and equal. As I learn to require less female roles from her and to share in "feminine" tasks, she learns to require less male roles from me. I am learning to be weak at times without feeling guilty about it. It's a slow process, but it's happening.

As a father, it was hard for me to take when I discovered that my socialization had not prepared me to be a tender and nurturing person. I spent a lot of time with Joni, but it was mostly play. I am slowly learning now the so-called feminine capacities for providing warmth and security to a young child.

Finally, Robin Morgan's visit was important to me because I am the father of a daughter. Any token, verbal support of the women's movement is not enough here, for if we bring up our daughters in the usual father-breadwinner/mother-housewife pattern they will continue to grow into the same limited roles and consciousnesses of many women today. It is bitally important to me that Joni have the same opportunities for growth that we have long assumed boys should have. To do this, I must listen to women like Robin Morgan.

But it seems that much of the Seminary (which should be a prophetic element within the Church) if not openly hostile toward women, is content in a typically "liberal" way to give verbal support to the idea of liberation for women while criticizing their methods and efforts to attain it. The oppressors telling the oppressed how to go about their revolution!

Steve Owen

VIEWPOINT

Volume X, No. 4 December 13, 1972

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MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM VIEWPOINT'S STAFF
John V. Carlson
Daniel Shute Dave Wiseman
Judi Muller Alex Wales
Memebers of ABS Academic Committee

THE SCRIPTURE READING
From the King James I. Version

In those days a decree went out from President McCord that all the Seminary should be insured. This was the first group insurance plan, when Adams was Dean of the Seminary. And all went to be insured, each to his own favorite place upon the campus. And Joseph the Middler also went up from Trenton (for he was not yet married, and could not live at Princeton-Windsor), to the Library, and into the smoking lounge, for he smoked a pipe, as was the custom, to be insured with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to have natural childbirth, for there were no maternity benefits, and they could not afford an obstetrician. And she gave birth to her first born, a son, and wrapped him in an insurance policy, for that was all it was good for, and laid him in a brief case, for they had allowed their Blue Cross to expire, and they could not find an inexpensive hospital.

And in that same part of the campus, there were other seminarians out in the parking lot, trying to find a place to park their cars, and keeping watch over them, lest a custodian should place a ticket upon the windshield. And a pastoral counselor appeared to them, and the glory of practical theology shone around them, and they were filled with fear. And the counselor said to them, "What I hear you saying is that you are afraid. I seem to be frightening you, and yet I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the Seminary, for to you is born this day in the library a semester project who will pay all your medical expenses, and chip in for parking tickets, too. And this will be a sign for you: you will find the baby in the smoking lounge, wrapped in a life insurance policy, and lying in a briefcase." And suddenly there was with the pastoral counselor a multitude of pastoral care and counseling students, each with a quarter of CPE, praising Carl Rogers, and saying,

"Glory to client-centered therapy,
for what we hear you saying is that you
accept our irrational guilt feelings and
will pay for our maternity benefits."

And when the counselor went away from them into 21 Dickinson Street, the seminarians said to one another, "Let us go over to the library and see this thing that has happened, which the counselor has enabled us to see." And they went as soon as the coffee break was over, and found Mary and Joseph the Middler, and the babe lying in a briefcase, for the seminary did not provide day care service. And when they saw it, they made known the saying which had been told them concerning the child; and all who heard it thought the seminarians were probably fundies and in need of a chaplain. But Mary kept all these things, pondering them in her heart, and developing a severe post-partem depression. And the seminarians returned, glorifying Hiltner and Rogers for all they had heard and seen, even as they had had their feelings reflected.

jvc

THE AMERICAN HI-JACKING OF RESPONSIBILITY

There was a time in America
when
people respected one another
and
had a sense of responsibility
for one another.

Nov.
in '72
we see a
hi-jacking of responsibility
mankind has gone berserk.

Babylon II, we view on the scene.
Amos, himself, would lament
(not just Jeremiah)
if he lived here
in the United States.

The Lord sees once again almond tree rods
and
seething pots.
Occidental, this time.

O Lord God Omnipotent,
send down again
whirlwinds of amber
complete
with winged, zoo-like creatures.

Speak to us Father
with
thunder and lighting
for
we can barely perceive your truths
in our land these days.

Intercede again, O Lord,
please intercede,
Christ's truths have been ignored
and
we are starved
for justice
again.

Irene Tokar

SEX AND OBSCENITY

For better or for worse, our generation is hung up on sex. This despite the ominous warnings of all kinds of religious leaders about the dangers, expecially to our young people, of the rising tide of obscenity: obscenity on television and radio, in books, movies, newspapers and advertising. In defining obscenity, the dictionary says among other things: "offensive to morals, tending to deprave or corrupt", "gross indecency". To be sure, we must clobber obscenity wherever it raises its ugly head but why stop with the obscenity of sex? Isn't it time we started decrying some other sins besides sex? Some other dimensions of obscenity?

What about the obscenity of starvation and world hunger? The average life expectancy in Asia is thirty-two years, because most of the people who live there never get enough to eat. Is this not offensive to our morals - we who profess the dignity of a human person? And what about the obscenity of poverty? The people who live in Asia and Africa, our brothers and sisters in the human family, constitute one half of the world's population, yet they receive only eleven percent of the world's income. One third of the world population receives a per-caita income of lesss than twenty-five cents a day - about the price of a draft beer. Is this not obscene, "gross indecency"?

And, bringing the matter closer to home, what about the obscenity of racism? Is it not "temding to deprave or corrupt" when we close our hearts and minds against another human being, when we pre-judge (prejudice) him, exclude him from our schools, our neighborhoods, most of our jobs, yes, our churches, solely because of the color of his skin? Many people these days are greatly scandalized by obscene speech or movies or the porno shows around Times Square. Bully for them. But don't be fooled. The most obscene word in the English language is not one of the four-letter kind that we frequently associate with obscenity. In my view at least, the most obscene words are "nigger" or "pig" or "spic" or "gook" - when they fall from the lips of a man filled with hatred, loathing and utter contempt for another human being - and for no other reason than that he is black or white or Spanish-speaking or oriental. This it seems to me, is the obscenity that is truly degrading.

We are rapidly approaching the observance of Christmas, the coming into our midst of the Prince of Peace in the person of Jesus Christ, our Brother. What better time for all men of good will to do a little serious thinking about actions and attitudes that are really obscene.

Richard T. McCue
LCDR, CHC, USN
Th. M. Program

THE CHRISTIAN MONOCLE (or through a glass - darkly)
A one-eyed perspective on Christianity
or
How to Make Christianity Relevant Without Really Trying

The Christian Monovle, with the contributions of many others, presents (Ta-da!) - Christian Education through bubble gum cards. Forthwith - a means of using modern media to reach primary Christian pupils with real pizazz!

Just imagine, Junior walks into the local drugstore and buys a package of bubble gum, appropriately named something like "King of the Chews." Inside Junior finds cards, like baseball trading cards, with a picture of one of the twelve apostles on each one (Later series to follow - Favorite Saints of the Christian Church, Reformers, Modern day Evangelists). On the back of the Card- conversion averages, baptisms, important or little known facts about each one, as well as the other vital statistics! There could even be a "team picture", gathered around the training table. Wow! The kids could save 'em, trade 'em or hang 'em on their bedroom walls.

And don't forget those outer wrappers! For twelve wrappers and 50¢ (no stamps, please) kids can send away for a super-duper disciple watch, with the twelve apostles placed around the dial, Peter on top and Judas on the bottom (of course) and the hands of God sweeping through the hours of eternal time. Holy Metaphor! And for 40 wrappers and $4.95 you can get a large wall clock built on the same plan which on the hour says, "The Hour has come and now is." Golly Gee! One hundred and forty four wrappers and 35¢ will get you a genuine facsimile of an M.Div degree that you can frame and hang on your wall. The list of other available prizes is just too numerous to list here but they include; crosses, posters, and all sorts of neat things.

Christian Educators take note! This could be the new wave of the future - making Christian symbols and history a living reality, a part of our culture. Here are the tools! Now all you have to do is make Christianity a part of our culture. But as always the Christian Monocle will seek to look askance at reality, while progress moves.

Alex Wales

* * * * * *

TIME

O Terrible fountain of time
that flows with never ceasing flux.
Cease thy holy hellish waters flow I pray
Have done with mutability
That for one moment I might see
life in its eternity.

Andrew Schøtkin

THE MAGIC OF CHRISTMAS

In one of his recent lectures, Dr. Murdock commented, with reference to the re-election of Nixon, that all America has become Disneyland. We are a technological play-pen where comfort-loving employees dissipate their plastic existence in apathetic ignorance. And Christmas is the great feast to our great god, the GNP at its grossest. The flood of goods and services - santas, candy, tinsel angels, neon lights, evergreens, gifts, creches, artificial snow - vomit upon the Christ-child, who is like Samuel Becket's baby underneath the garbage heap. Thus we either dull our most rudimentary sensibilities and join in the fun, or maintain our aloofness by interjecting cynical comments into the carnival, or withdraw completely and pray for an early spring. The Magic of Christmas, when allowed free reign in a plutocratic society, has manifested itself to be Halloween. Like the feasts which wealthy West Coast Indians gave to drive their neighbors to poverty, we lie in wait an entire year to plunder each other's savings accounts, or credit allowances.

Who is responsible for this bizarre phenomenon? Partly responsible is the more pragmatic Western Church who found a mother bearing a Child more easy to understand than the resurrection of the Crucified. Perhaps Matthew and Luke are to blame, for telling such a good story. Commercialism is not to blame, because commercialism is only a vulture which preys on dead things. (For where the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.) So Christmas is dead; Christmas, when everybody likes to go to church, sing a few carols, hear the minister say that he wished the church were always this full, and hear the "Christmas story." "There went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be taxed... And there were in the same country shepherds... And lo! an angel ..." and the familiar words wrap us in a womb of nostalgic forgetfulness. For a magic moment we believe it might all be true. Then the real world comes crowding back on us like a hangover from cheap wine. And cheap wine it is, this "Christmas story." That is the something that is rotten in the state of Denmark. Can you imagine Joseph today running to and fro! his girl is pregnant! he doesn't remember doing it! she is talking about spirits (which sounds horrid)! he himself is starting to hallucinate! finally he has the answer - Mary can get an abortion! Thus the cosmic coup d'etat which was scheduled to shake the universe is abortive.

This is why the feast, Cristes-mass, has lost all content; we refuse to see the Christmas "story" as his-story. But surely, you say, I would rather continue the commercial pretense in selfish complicity, than impute history to Christmas.

If there is anything missing in the Church today, it is a respect for tradition and a desire for the devotional life. Try presuming on the history. It is embarrassing to admit you were wrong. Wrong about old men and old women, wrong about predictions, wrong about angels, wrong about the Holy Spirit. Try presuming the Messiah did in fact come. Even if every human being alive should deny the Messiah's birth, he is still alive.

Dan Shute

"MARY AND JOSEPH'S LATEST OFFSPRING: AN ILLEGITIMATE BIRTH"

Mary and Joseph have etymologically come together to produce the current cinema-verite entitled Marjoe, the life story of the child revivalist Marjoe Gortner who eventually comes of age (or at least thinks he does). This semi-documentary film is the "portrait of the con artist as a young man"[1] who began working his way down the saw dust trail by working his way into the hearts and souls of the Pentacostalist crowds.

By age four Marjoe was billed as the world's youngest evangelist and, by the end of his first ten years of preaching memorized sermons, his parents had collected in the $3 million to prove it. His performances brought electric entertainment, spiritual renewal and certainly a kind of sexual release to the mobs of emotionally vulnerable believers.

The film shows the two-faced Marjoe of age 28 who, on-stage, attests to his personally being called by Christ to spread the Word while off-stage he appears as the counter-culture, play-full cynic. He confesses, "I can't think of a time that I ever believed in God or thought it was a miracle of God that I preached. I just knew I could do it well."[2] -- well enough for thousands of sincere and honest believers to be the clay in the crafty potter's hands.

The movie itself becomes a prostitution of the people who entrusted to him their very souls for, it films them at the height of their ecstasy and religious fervor.

Here are some reactions of the seminary community:

"The disturbing issue that I see is that a fraud can apparently do more for people in terms of liberating them than more sincere ministers ever do. If I had to choose between the good that Marjoe accomplished and the good that the average minister accomplishes, I would choose that of Marjoe." Anonymous

"Marjoe's parents were gearing him to be first, the great crowd manipulator and, second, the spiritual leader. Perhaps, at first, they were spiritually motivated but Marjoe's millions clouded and distorted the message for them. Yet through the years of Marjoe's ministry (?) God touched the lives of many of those to whom he preached. The sinister irony is that although Marjoe led many people to Christ, he himself rejected and completely belittled the gospel message." R.L. Saxon

"I didn't see the movie. I wouldn't spend the money to support such mockery." S. Hutton

"That's a helluva lot of fraud to go through for a handmade silver watch, a water bed, and a black babe. Oh hell, that's where it's at anyway. Anonymous

"It made me angry that Marjoe's pompous attitude was making fun of other people's honest experience and yet he was not willing to solve his own honest reactions to the faith. It made me sad that he was so close to the information and feelings about Jesus Christ and to his own self yet ended up making a movie because he was so unsure of what he believed." R. Brown

(cont. p.10)

AN ADVENT SERMON

Old Testament Lesson: Isaiah 9: 1-7
New Testament Lesson: Luke 2: 6-14

Because this is the beginning of the Advent season and because we are all being pushed by advertising to begin making ready for Christmas maybe it's time we address ourselves to the topic of Christmas and it's significance to us. I know its early to be talking about the birth of Jesus and we are all accustomed to hearing the scripture lesson that was just read on Christmas Eve at the Candlelight Service however, our topic is not the actural birth but rather the significance of the preparation for the birth. Lets address ourselves to two questions, first involving what Christmas is not and second what Christmas is. In asking the first of these two questions lets look at what advertising has done to Christmas. The early rush in advertising on T.V., Radio, in stores and in the Newspaper all deal with the economical benefits that are taken advantage of through the use of the Christmas season. We have all been subjected to years of hard sell to the point that we have been all but completely brain-washed as to our feelings and actions toward the Christmas season. If you feel the statement just made is a bit strong lets look at what advertising has done and look at what Christmas is not.

Christmas is not Frosty the Snowman, Rudolph the Red Nosed Reindeer, Jolly Old Saint Nicholas, or poems about the Night before Christmas. These things all deal with a Winter Festival, and Christmas is not a winter festival. There is a difference between a Christian Holy Day and a Winter Carnival. What advertising has done has made us think of Christmas in much the same way we think of New Years Eve. We sing songs and practise alot of things that are in no way related to what Christmas is about and in fact make no mention of Christ, God or anything else that is central to the Christian Holy Day.

Because at the birth of Jesus there were three Magi who gave gifts in honor of the child Jesus we have become paranoid in our buying presents for our children and relatives. And naturally advertising has been and is capitalizing upon our parinoia. The producers and sellers of toys, clothes, cars, liquor, luxury items etc. are all pushing us to get the right gift for the right person in the name of Christmas. While it may be a very generous thing to do, to give gifts, it is not a very Christian thing to do to take advantage of the scripture and its message to promote free enterprise. The result is that our giving is selfish while we miss the point of God's giving. The resulting tendency is to appreciate only the material gain rather than what has really been given and the reason for giving. Christmas is not"Christmans shopping."

Christmas is not what was once a living green Pine or Spruce tree that is now or shortly will be cut down and placed inside so that we can sit and watch it die. Christmas is not plastic replicas of the nativity scene, mass produced and sole at reasonable prices, it is not aluminum icicles, canned snow, fake stars, plastic angels, fat Santas, redyellowgreenblueorangepurplewhite blinking lights, gold and silver tinsel; and Christmas is not lying to our children about a fat man in a red suit that miraculously travels around in a sleigh pulled by flying reindeer.

Now that we have discussed the prostitution of Christ's coming to this world as God's example of His love for mankind, we can now discuss what Christmas is.

I have said that Christmas is not a winter festival but it is a festival honoring what has been done for us through God's love. It is a time that we should rejoice by throwing a birthday party for theChrist child. If we remember the Old Testament lesson we should feel as Isaiah felt and celebrate by singing happy songs, giving thanks, dancing,laughing for the glory of God not for the glory of Free Enterprise.

I have mentioned the giving of gifts at Christmas time as a result of the pressure of capitalistic gain. There is nothing wrong with giving gifts during this season if it reminds us of the fact that Christ came to us in much the same way that we and our children came into this world; with the same child's delight at gifts and toys and colored lights and pretty paper, colored ribbon, fancy food and candy. If we remember this then all that we have traditionally learned to do at Christmas time can be transformed into a celebration for the Christ child and not a self indulgent tradition. This Christmas and during this advent season find theChrist, bring your child to sit on the lap of the man who said, "suffer the little children to come to me, for such is the Kingdom of heaven." not on the lap of one fat Santa out of millions of fat Santas found in every department store of every city or village whose only promise is of a toy that will, if lucky, last about one month before it is broken or discarded.

Find the Christ and celebrate His coming by having a party that you could invite Him to. Sing Happy Birthday this year to the Christ child without thick tongues and blood shot eyes, don't over indulge yourselves with your own pleasure bur bring pleasure to others, after all Christmas happens only once a year and if you can't think of others once a year, for one day then the meaning of Christmas, the sacrifice of God, all have become transformed by Human selfishness and Christmas is no longer a joyous occasion but an occasion for mourning, crying, feelings of depression and personal loss. Christmas should be a joyous occassion, unfettered by rushing around to get the right present for the right person so that we can receive the right gift for ourselves. The next time you want to give the right gift think about God's gift and if you can't match it at least give in the spirit that He gave.

Finally, we must ignore the hypocrisy and heresy of what our affluent society has done to Christmas in the name of free enterprise. I don't know how many of you saw on T.V. last year the Christmas special "How the Grinch Stole Christmas." but it is an important message that is being given to us by Dr. Suess. The Grinch decided to steal Christmas from the people of Whoville do he went down and stole all of the Christmas trees, Christmas toys, Christmas food, Christmas musical instruments, Christmas decorations, thinking much the same way we think, that these things are what make Christmas. But Christmas day the people of Whoville still came out and went to the middle of town and began singing adoration to God for what had happened that first Christmas. We are very much like that Grinch, we can not understand why those people would still be able to celebrate and sing after the myths of Santa Clause, and the destruction of material decorations and all of the rest of the established traditional trappings we have placed on Christmas, after these are all gone we can not understand how to celebrate Christmas, and even worse why we should celebrate Christmas. We have to learn why the Grinch's heart grw three sizes larger:

"Maybe Christmas doesn't come from a store...
Maybe Christmas means - perhaps, just perhaps
Christmas means something more."

Read Luke 2: 6-14

AMEN

Stephen Kenney

(continued from page 7)

"The movie was one of the biggest ego trips that was ever put over on the American public. By the very making of the film, Marjoe was setting himself up for a new career as a rock singer. And he has; people know who Marjoe is now." N. Heatwole

"True, Marjoe is a con artist. But in light of the hiddenness of God, who are we to judge whether or not God has spoken through Marjoe. After all, God has previously used an ass to further his kingdom." R. Hendrickson

The film raises some important issues worth our attention. There is certainly power in being a preacher and, in some of our cases, in being ordained clergymen so where does the difference lie between power to motivate and power to manipulate? As a clergyman, it is all too easy to become captive to what people want to hear so how do we respond to that captivity?[3] How do we educate people to be open to their leaders, in the realm of faith or in the realm of politics or in whatever realm, while teaching them to be concurrently critical?

If you have not yet seen the film you might ask yourself one final question. Do you want to be conned into seeing one of Marjoe's latest and more entertaining performances? No guarantees are made that the decision will change your life.

J. David Wiseman

1. Meehan, Thomas, "Portrait of a Con Artist as a Young Man," Saturday Review, 55:67, August 26, 1972

2. Ibid.

3. Christian Century, 89:853-4, August 30, 1972